

THE FREETHINKER.

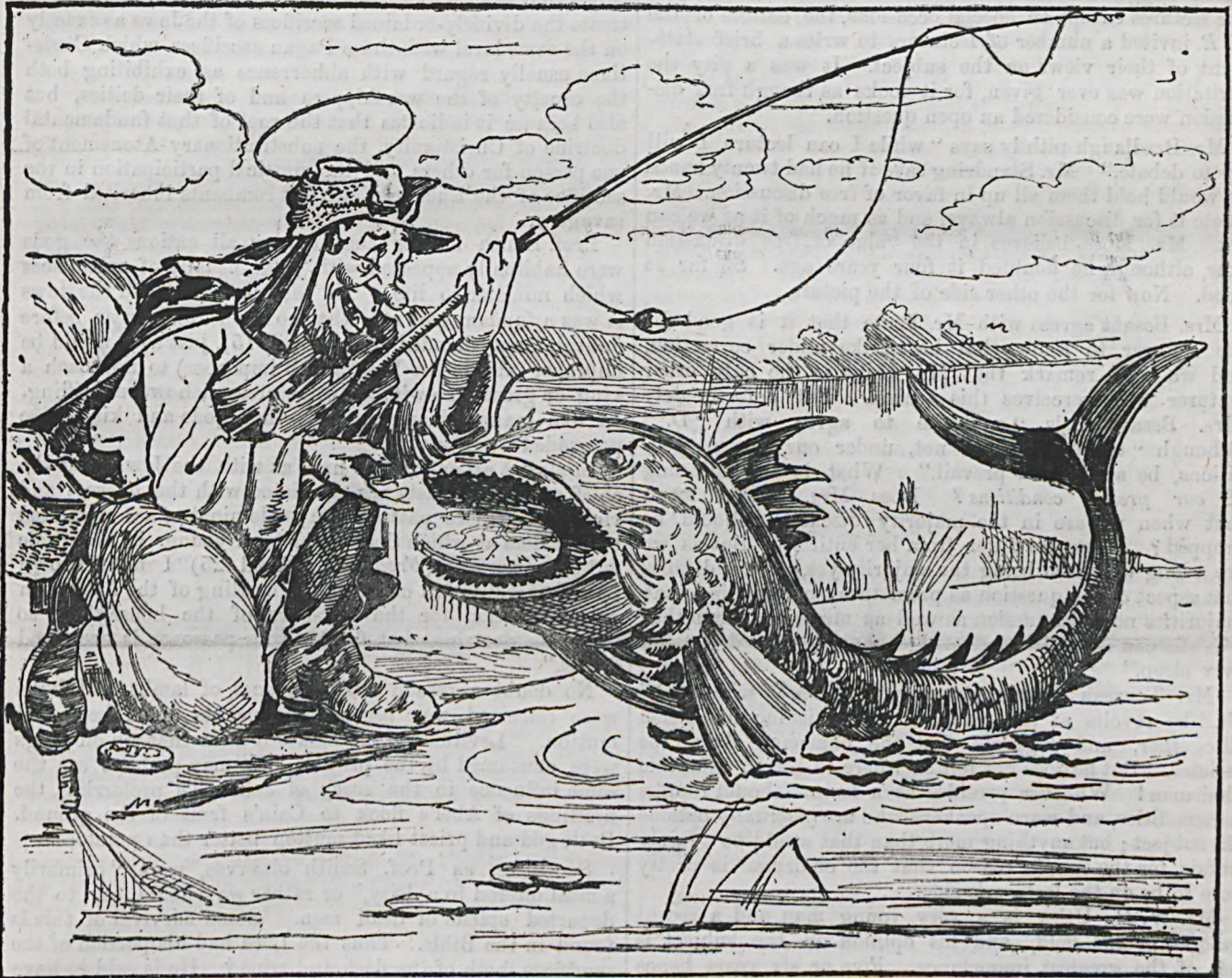
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. VI.—No. 50.]

DECEMBER 12, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.



A WEALTHY FISH.

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? . . . Jesus saith. . . . Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.—MATT. XVII., 24-27.

FREE DISCUSSION.

MR. WALTER BAGEHOT, who was one of the most pregnant and suggestive of our thinkers, and whose writings were so highly praised by Mr. Darwin, called our modern political system "government by discussion." Any person who looks about him must see the truth of this description. Never was there a time when discussion was so rampant. Every principle and project is debated from every point of view. From Parliament to the amateur Debating Society; from the leaders of scientific thought like Huxley, Tyndall and Spencer to the little whipper-snappers of the orthodox teaching; from the Government to the poorest Caucus; from St. George's and St. James's Hall to the street corner; all sorts of subjects are discussed incessantly. Regarded at any particular moment it seems a perfect Babel. But orderly thought grows out of the chaos of speech. Common conclusions are arrived at eventually, and the wordy warfare is carried on over fresh topics. There is undoubtedly much waste of time and energy, but waste is nature's method in the economy of life. She produces "fifty seeds for every one she brings

to bear." Yet out of the wasteful competition comes solidity and strength; and so, out of the Babel of discussion comes intellectual certitude and enduring conviction. Far from perfection, the method is relatively good. It is substituting mental warfare for physical warfare; it is transferring the battle of progress from the bloody field to the brain; and it leads to the virtues of patience in the midst of earnestness, toleration in the midst of struggling beliefs, and a growing trust in the saving power of intelligence.

To the honour of Freethought, it has always believed in discussion, and plenty of it. Freethinkers fought the hardest among the heroes of our free press, and for the right of free public meeting. While the parson preached at his congregation, the Freethought lecturer spoke to his audience; and instead of resenting criticism as an insult, he invited it as a means of sifting truth. Our party always maintained the noble tradition of freedom, and it could always make the proud boast that the breath of criticism could blow through its teachings as freely as the wind through the branches of a tree. What was weak or false might fall, but what was strong and true would stand more firmly for the blast.

Unfortunately there appears a disposition on the part of some Freethinkers to fling away this tradition, and circumscribe the freedom of discussion. A retrograde suggestion has been made by "D" in the *National Reformer*, which invites the sneers and taunts of our opponents, who will say, "Ah, those Freethinkers were very fond of discussion when they were making converts from our side, but directly they are numerous enough they begin to think of stopping or restricting discussion, exactly as they always charged us with doing. After all, as we often told them, dogmatism is not altogether the child of religion, but is born of human nature itself."

Wishing to obtain some "competent opinions" as to "D's" suggestion that debate should be disallowed after our lectures except on special occasions, the editors of the *N. R.* invited a number of lecturers to write a brief statement of their views on the subject. It was a pity the invitation was ever given, for it looks as though free discussion were considered an open question.

Mr. Bradlaugh pithily says "while I can lecture I will try to debate." Mr. Standring says if he had twenty hands he would hold them all up in favor of free discussion. Mr. Foote is for discussion always, and as much of it as we can get. Mr. Moss believes in the value of free discussion now, although he doubted it four years ago. So far so good. Now for the other side of the picture.

Mrs. Besant agrees with Mr. Foote that it is good for the lecturer to know that he speaks under correction, and we may remark that Mr. Hunt is the only other lecturer who perceives this truism. But unfortunately Mrs. Besant feels "a desire to agree with 'D.'" although "the desire must not, under our present conditions, be allowed to prevail." What is the meaning of *our present conditions*? Does Mrs. Besant mean that when we are in the majority discussion should be dropped? If so, we differ from her entirely. But as we are a long way from being the majority yet, we may dismiss that aspect of the question as premature; only adding that majorities need discussion as well as minorities, and that "Truth can never be confirmed enough, though doubt did ever sleep."

Mr. Touzeau Parris also "sympathises" with "D." Still he revolts at the notion of extinguishing discussion altogether, and suggests that the chairman should be stricter. But he does not tell us where to get an infallible chairman! Whoever presides at a lecture should repress personalities, and warn speakers who are *flagrantly* outside the subject; but anything more than that would be grossly unfair, for the simple reason that the chairman is pretty sure to be on the lecturer's side.

Mr. W. H. Utley is a very young man and a recent laborer in the field, and his opinion on the subject is not of the greatest importance. Five or six years hence he will be entitled to speak. Meanwhile we may remind him that Freethought lecturers do not absolutely require to be told that they should not "bully" but "persuade," and that if they did the lesson should come from an older monitor. Nor is it true that "the lecturers themselves are chiefly to blame" for the falling off in the "quantity and quality too of the opposition at our lectures." A little inquiry into the state of things before he was born would have shown him that discussion was plentiful enough until the clergy found they lost more than they gained by it. The secret of their silence is the consciousness that their cause is hard to defend. Otherwise, how is it that it is now so difficult to induce a Christian minister to hold a set debate under the fairest conditions with a Freethought leader?

Two young lady lecturers also sympathise with "D.," but Mrs. Sowden and Miss Smith are very much at variance as to facts; the latter says her opponents have been mostly courteous, while the former complains of "offensive personalities" and "obscene" remarks. Neither of them, however, has met with more than two or three opponents who had any knowledge of the subject. By-and-bye they may be more fortunate, and eventually when the confidence or susceptibility of youth is abated they may reconcile themselves to a free platform. Meanwhile, as all the lecturers longest in the field are in favor of free discussion, it is pretty safe; and beyond them is the rank and file of the Freethought party, who will have to be heard before it is meddled with.

G. W. FOOTE.

PROFESSOR W. ROBERTSON SMITH ON SACRIFICE.*

THE removal of Prof. Robertson Smith from his position as teacher of Hebrew to the Scotch Free Church College by no means lessened his heresy, but only placed him in a position to make it the more noticeable. At Cambridge he commands far more general attention than he could hope to do in Scotland, and the mild articles from his pen in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, for which he was first prosecuted for heresy, have been succeeded by others exhibiting more pronounced scholarship and scientific criticism.

The paper on "*Sacrifice*" in the newly-published volume is one that is sure to attract attention, not only because it treats the divinely-ordained sacrifices of the Jews as exactly on the same level with those Pagan sacrifices which Christians usually regard with abhorrence as exhibiting both the cruelty of the worshippers and of their deities, but also because it indicates that the root of that fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the substitutionary Atonement of one person for others, and the mystical participation in the sacrifice of the Eucharist, are but remnants inherited from savagery.

Prof. Smith notices that among all nations the gods were habitually appeased with gifts, usually of substances which minister to life. He remarks that with the Jews it was a fundamental rule that no one is to appear before Jahveh empty-handed (Exod. xxiii. 15), just as it would be improper (and in the East is still improper) to approach a king or great man without some present, however trifling. In like manner Homer teaches that gods and kings are persuaded by gifts.

In almost all nations we find, as with the Jews, that the chief sacrificial feasts are associated with the harvest and vintage, or where pastoral life predominates, are regulated by the time at which flocks bear their young. In an article on the Passover (*Freethinker*, April 25) I have shown how that institution connects the firstling of the flock with its substitution for the first-born of the house, and so led to the doctrine that "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."

No doubt a reason why sacrifices of lambs and bulls were esteemed was because the priests liked beef and mutton. Leviticus vi. 26 makes it clear that sin-offerings were consumed by the priests. We may perhaps see the same influence in the story of Jehovah's preferring the firstlings of Abel's flock to Cain's fruit of the ground. Both god and priest liked mutton better than potatoes.

Sacrifices, as Prof. Smith observes, were "primarily a meal offered to a deity," or rather we should say to the departed spirits of dead men. Some survival of this is found in the Bible. Thus the Lord had his portion of the sacrifices, both of the flesh and wine.† He is said to have "smelled a sweet savor" when Noah offered his sacrifice (Gen. viii. 21), and sacrifices are indeed called "food of the God" (Lev. xxi. 8, 17, 21, 22; Numb. xxviii. 2) though our translators have done their best to conceal the meaning.

The steps which connect the sacrifice of the mess, or savage feast, where the gods are supposed to eat, with the Christian sacrifice of the mass, or Lord's Supper—not where he eats, but where he is eaten—are curious, and depend upon the savage ideas of substituting offerings and of entering into kinship through a blood covenant. Prof. Smith says:

"The idea of substitution is widespread through all early religions, and is found in honorific as well as in piacular rites; the Romans, for example, substituted models in wax or dough for victims that could not be procured according to the ritual, or else feigned that a sheep was a stag or the like."

By an extension of the idea, the Romans substituted puppets for the human sacrifices to Mania, and cast rush dolls into the Tiber at the yearly atoning sacrifice on the Sublician bridge. More usually the life of an animal is accepted by the god in the place of a human life, as in the case of Jahveh and Isaac. Among the Egyptians the victim was marked with a seal bearing the imago of a man bound, and kneeling with a sword at his throat. Often we

* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol xxi., article "Sacrifice."

† In the Sama Veda, the great god Indra is praised as him "who gets muzzy on the sacrificial beverage placed in the sacred vessels." (Stevenson's translation, p. 115). And in the same Veda we read "The beloved manes of our ancestors, which before were trembling through hunger, have now eaten and are satisfied" (p. 80).

find a ceremonial laying of the sin to be expiated on the head of the victim (Herodotus *Euterpe* 39; Leviticus iv. 4, compared with xiv. 21). In the case of the scapegoat, all the sins of the nation were placed upon one animal, supposed to be the evil spirit Azazel, and sent off into the wilderness.

The *mystical sacrifice*, or sacrament, is also dealt with by Prof. Smith, who connects it with the widely-extended custom of the "blood covenant." Blood being considered the symbol of life, offerings of blood were peculiarly significant. Covenants were ratified by a bloody sacrifice. Outsiders were admitted into a tribe by the intercommingling of blood. In all the forms of blood covenant, whether a sacrifice is offered or the veins of the parties opened and their own blood imbibed, the idea is that the bond created is a bond of kindred. Herbert Spencer in his *Sociology* describes a kind of eucharist among the Aztecs. He says:

"They made a sort of small idol of seeds and ate them as the body or memory of their gods. As the seeds were cemented partly by the blood of sacrificed boys; as their gods were cannibal gods; as Huitzilopochtli, whose worship included this rite, was the god to whom human sacrifices were most extensive; it is clear that the aim was to establish community with him by taking blood in common."

Professor Smith tells us also:

"In Mexico the worshippers ate sacramentally paste idols of the gods, or slew and feasted on a human being who was feigned to be a representative of the deity. The Mexican gods are unquestionably developed out of totems, and these sacraments are on one line with the totem mysteries of the ruder Indian tribes in which once a year the sacred animal is eaten body and blood."

Professor Smith traces the similarity with the mystical sacrifices of the cities of the Roman Empire, but he does not point out that this savage participation in the blood of a human being, feigned to be a representative of the deity, is on one line with the Christian doctrine of the real presence of the blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

SOME time ago the Christian Evidence people made a great noise about a "Moabite Stone" that had been discovered. It was found to contain the name of Mesha, the king of Moab and some particulars of a battle with the people of Israel. So marvellous a confirmation of the truth of holy writ was of course made the theme of numerous sermons and lectures. It was, however, soon discovered that King Mesha claimed the victory for himself whereas the Bible (2 Kings iii.,) makes him defeated, and the Bible-bangers dropped the Moabite stone as they would a hot potato.

PROFESSORS SOCIN and Smeud have now published a new translation from the Moabite Stone, from which it appears that not only were the Israelites defeated, but that the altars of Jehovah himself were taken and prostrated before the rival god Chemosh. As the Israelites ascribed their commands to pillage and destroy their neighbors to their God Jahveh, so did the Moabites to their God Chemosh. The following is a portion of the translation referred to. "And Chemosh said to me, Go and take Nebo of Israel, and I went in the night and fought against it from the break of day until noon and took it and slew all, seven thousand men and boys and women. And I took from them the altars of Yahveh (Jehovah) and dragged them before Chemosh."

We see from the *Echo* that a "sweater" who pays sevenpence a day to one of the women he employs, has contributed a "princely donation" to a church restoration fund. Christ taught the blessedness of poverty, and his "sweating" disciple endeavors to spread that blessing as widely as possible. For his own part, as a model Christian, he denies himself the moral luxury of that enviable condition.

A WELL-KNOWN lawyer of this city rejoices in a very small son, who is possessed of a most logical turn of mind. Like every other youngster, the child believed in Santa Claus, and was never tired of hearing how his Christmas presents were brought down the chimney by that generous and jolly saint. Last year, however, it was considered advisable to dissipate these nursery illusions, and to tell him that it was papa and mamma who really filled his stocking, and that Santa Claus was only a myth. The little fellow listened patiently to his father's explanation, and then, after a moment's deep reflection, said:—"Well, father, I suppose all those are lies, too, you've been telling me about Jesus Christ."—*Boston Investigator*.

The *Leamington Spa* publishes a letter from an Anglo-Israel maniac, named George Lilwall, announcing the conversion of "the American High-priest of Atheism, Col. Bob Ingersoll." Mr. Lilwall says he has received a letter from a Dr. Hy. Hodson Rugg, who has received a letter from Edward Hine which conveys "the glorious news that he has by his lectures on our Identity with lost Israel, in the United States and Canada, converted the Arch-Atheist Colonel Bob Ingersoll [*sic*] to Christianity," and that "5,000 of his followers have been won for Christianity through Mr. Hine's grand mission work the other side of the Atlantic." It is scarcely necessary to say that the latest American mails convey no account of this remarkable conversion. Apparently Mr. Hine or some of his friends are qualifying to outdo the Bible writers in the matter of drawing the long bow.

CURIOSLY enough, the same rubbish about Ingersoll's conversion appears in the *South Eastern Gazette* in a letter purporting to be from H. H. Rugg to Mr. Isaac Loveland, of Shoreham, Sevenoaks. If we possessed as much charity as an ordinary Christian we should say that Mr. Hine or Dr. Rugg was a champion liar; but as both of them are propagators of the most idiotic craze that ever entered the human head, it is just possible they may be laboring under hallucination. Perhaps some Yankee wag has been playing a joke on soft-headed Hine in the name of "Pagan Bob," who will probably laugh over it as heartily as anybody.

MISS "MARSHALL" BOOTH has issued a proclamation to the Army announcing her intended marriage to "Captain" Clibborn. She says: "After long holding up the question to the light before God we have decided to unite together by marriage, steadfastly convinced that by so doing we shall fulfil his will and better accomplish the duty he has assigned to us in the war." The "dear General and Mrs. Booth" approve of the wedding, after having "seriously weighed it in the sight of the Lord." Evidently the saints care little for the injunctions of Paul and Jesus, who both lived single lives and encouraged celibacy. The faithful are told in a postscript, which, of course, is the most important part in a lady's proclamation, that the faithful "may send in their gifts" in order to help the married couple to "press on the war harder than ever during next year." Saints are always passing the hat round.

THE Rev. H. R. Haweis has preached a remarkable sermon in which he said that he never read the Athanasian Creed because he did not believe in it, and that he was lukewarm about the Thirty-nine Articles. When a minister of the Church of England rejects her creeds and don't care for her articles it is time he left it, even if he did forfeit the loaves and fishes. Honesty requires some sacrifices even from ministers. The reports say that the sermon created a "profound sensation." Mr. Haweis does not seem to believe much in the apostolic succession or in the Holy Ghost business. He says that the life of the Church is not derived from something mysterious trickling through a bishop's fingers when he lays hands on a priest's head. When we talk like this it is blasphemy. When a clergyman does so it is witty and courageous utterance of the truth.

MR. HAWEIS, however, denies the accuracy of the reporters. He claims that he said that he did not *like* the Athanasian Creed, and not that he did not believe in it. Perhaps the reporters have made a mistake in giving the substance of his remarks, for sky-pilots are very good at saying things in round-about fashion without committing themselves too far.

A NEW Messiah has come to the front again in the Fiji Islands after suffering eighteen months' imprisonment from the British believers in the only genuine Messiah. The natives, being thorough Christians and very credulous, readily believe in his prophecies of the approaching end of the world and the destruction of the whites—apparently, as they understand him, by the hands of the redeemed natives. When he was condemned to imprisonment the people rushed away for fear the Court-house should fall on their heads.

THE Rev. E. S. Foulkes, writing in the *Guardian* on the Canon of Scripture, admits that the books of the New Testament were put together in the order and form we now have them, "we cannot say definitely where, when, or by whom." Yet Christians are almost unanimous that it was settled upon very good authority that these productions were genuine, while all the other numerous Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Revelations, which were extant in the early days of Christianity, were spurious and of no value.

ANOTHER Spiritist medium, a Mr. Goodfellow, of Jersey, has been seized while doing the materialising business and playing the part of the spirit. Of course he complains that the conditions of the séance were not observed.

IN regard to the validity of Protestant marriage the *English Churchman* gives the following quotation from an allocution by Pope Leo: "It behoves everybody to know that if among Christians any union occurs between a man and woman apart from the Sacrament, that union has neither the character nor the value of a real marriage. The nuptial tie does not exist."

THE *Evening News* denounces the views of Archbishop Walsh of Dublin upon tenant right as a "condoning of crime."

FOLLOWING the example of a dignitary of the Church some Roman Catholics in various courts have refused to swear on the Protestant version of the New Testament. This will facilitate the entire abolition of the oath.

DR. WESTCOTT, according to the *Rock*, says that in Jesus Christ "all the separate endowments of sex, race, and age co-exist in absolute harmony." If this means anything it means that Christ is at once male and female, a negro and a Caucasian, an infant and an old woman. That the unity of the attributes of the two latter is possible in one person is strikingly illustrated by many gushing commentators on the mysteries and glories of Christian theology.

LORD ROBERT MONTAGU has published his *Reasons for Leaving the Church of Rome*. The principal reason appears to have been his discovery of the gross immoralities of the Roman priests.

THE Rev. Mr. Carlile, who aims at being a sort of miniature, but more respectable Booth, has, under the name of the Church Army, got up an imitation of the Salvation Army, which, if not rivalling that society in hubbub and humbug, is almost as pertinacious in its appeals for money and men. Mr. Carlile complains that he can only get the services of those who are out of employment and unfit for anything else. But is not the whole organisation meant for persons of that description?

IN an article on the Suppression of Boycotting, in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen takes occasion to remark that "The precepts of the Sermon on the Mount would destroy all human society and convert the world into a vast monastery if they were accepted absolutely and carried into full execution on all occasions." If they are divine why should they not so be carried out?

THE vicar of Coldhurst, Oldham, wants to raise money for his Infants' School Fund, so he offers three prizes of two pounds, one pound, and ten shillings, for the largest number of words formed from the word "Coldhurst." Every competitor is to pay a shilling. One would think that the vicar of Coldhurst imagines all the people of Oldham to be fit for his Infants' School.

THE Oldham Salvation Army Barracks Building and Property Company, Limited, which was going, according to General Booth, to erect a hall for the accommodation of three thousand six hundred persons, has passed a resolution to wind itself up. Commissioner Sherwood, at the starting of the company, exhorted the Oldham people who had shares in cotton companies to sell them and invest the money in salvation. They are, however, sensible enough to prefer cotton to cant.

THE Rev. Hugh Price Hughes says he is sure, from talks he has had with living friends of John Stuart Mill, that if that great thinker had lived two or three years longer he would have become an avowed Christian. The sufficient answer to this nonsense is that Mill did *not* live two or three years longer.

"AN Indignant Foreigner" writes to the *Echo* asking why divorce cases are not heard *in camera*? He says: "In my simplicity as a foreigner I often wonder at the strange ways of English law, and I cannot help meditating upon the fact that about three or four years ago the editor of a paper was held in prison for twelve months, his crime having been to have published illustrations in his paper which were considered offensive to some people who believe in the Bible. In divorce cases, however, newspaper editors are at perfect liberty to publish the most painful and (to say the least) most improper details of the private lives, not only of the litigants themselves, but of nearly every one connected with them, and quite regardless of the fact that such publications outrage the feelings of every right-minded person, besides exercising a most unwholesome influence."

MILLIONS of Christians pray every Sunday that the Lord will deliver them "from battle, murder, and sudden death." But somehow pious people have a knack of dying suddenly, and the Lord seems unable to stop them. Last Tuesday evening William Whalley, the son of an Oldham cotton-spinner, was taken suddenly ill while reading the *Christian World*, and died in a few minutes. He had previously been in good health and had never complained of any illness. Was it "death by the visitation of God," or did the *Christian World* kill him? The jury returned a verdict of "death from heart-disease," but coroner's juries always like to shirk a delicate question.

THE emulators of the fasting feat of Jesus are on the increase. The fuss made in Paris over the feats of Succì and Merlatti have led to a host of rivals, of whom one M. Alexandre Jacques has offered to fast at the Westminster Aquarium. An English-woman also offers to fast forty days "for a consideration." If the performance comes off the Nazarene will be again outdone, for none of the fasting men and women expect any angels to be on hand to minister unto them.

"WITCHCRAFT is still not quite extinct. A Suffolk farmer only a few days ago charged a gipsy woman with obtaining from him £5, under threat of causing his wife's legs to rot off if he did not give her the money. Another dupe gave the woman £1, being assured that if she did so, she would have a fortune. What have our cultured, State-paid clergy been about all these years in these country districts to allow such gross ignorance and superstition to survive."—*Christian World*. What have they been doing? Why teaching the divine authority of the book which confirms this superstition.

OUR orthodox friend, the Rev. Dr. James McCann, recently visited Portsmouth and delivered his old lecture on "Secularism Impossible." He was of course gentlemanly in his manner, and courteous to opponents. But why did he indulge in that ghastly pun on Mr. Foote's name? Punning is the lowest form of wit, and punning on a man's name is the lowest form of pun. According to Dr. McCann, "Mr. Foote is a Secular leader, Secularism has got to the Foote, and it cannot get much further than that." Whereat the Christian ninnies grinned their wide-mouthed approval of their champion's wit. Dr. McCann might have reflected, and so might they if they had brains enough, that when you get to the Foote you are very near the solid ground.

MR. GLADSTONE is a signal instance of how a man can receive a classical education, and achieve the greatest distinction, and yet be more ignorant of science than a schoolboy. Canon Liddon is another instance. Preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral last Sunday, he dilated on the possible end of the world through an explosion of the earth's interior! He also told his large congregation that "every time we lifted our arms we defied the law of gravitation." What abject silliness this is, coming from a dignitary of a divinely-established Church! Canon Liddon might just as well say that the wind defies the law of gravitation when it blows a leaf up in the air. He evidently doesn't know what the law of gravitation is.

THE case of Hopkins v. Hopkins and Dukes in the Divorce Division disclosed a curious state of matters at a Christian Mission Hall at the East End. Mr. Hopkins, the petitioner, was in the habit of conducting an evangelistic service at a hall in Limehouse. He admitted having committed adultery with Miss Stuart, the proprietress of the mission hall, yet wished a divorce from his wife, who was also engaged in the mission business, on account of her adultery with the co-respondent. The petition was dismissed with costs.

AN anecdote is told of Moody, the revivalist, and a canal, to the following effect:—At one of the times Moody was holding forth in Rochester, New York, he took a walk along the canal bank one day, and came across a boatman who was swearing furiously. Marching up he confronted him, and abruptly asked, "Sir, do you know where you are going?" The unsuspecting man innocently replied that he was going up the canal on the boat Johnny Sand. "No, sir, you are not," continued Moody; "you are going to hell faster than a canal boat can carry you!" The boatman looked at him in astonishment, and then returned the question, "Sir, do you know where you are going?"—"I expect to go to heaven."—"Not by a — sight!" And, suiting the action to the word, he took Moody in his arms and tossed him into the murky waters, where he would have drowned had not the boatman relented and fished him out.

THE *Christian Herald* gives the history of two "death-dice" preserved in the royal palaces at Berlin. Two men being accused of murder, the Elector, "in his just anger, commanded that God's judgment should decide." The accused should throw the dice and he who threw the smaller number should be executed as proven guilty by the decision of the Almighty. The actual murderer threw two sixes, the highest number possible. The innocent man prayed to God and throw the dice with great force, so that one of them was broken in two. He thus exposed two sixes together with another point on the broken portion, thus proving him innocent in answer to his prayer. The murderer on witnessing this unexpected result "fell suddenly to the ground as if struck by lightning." All this is given as fact, and nothing is said to caution ignorant readers against belief in this kind of rubbish. The story, however, is no worse than those in the Bible, and the *Christian Herald* is only consistent in retailing such wares. It is the other Christian journals which are inconsistent, for they pretend to accept the Bible and yet reject its teachings and its superstitions at their own pleasure.

LITTLE Johnny Q., five years old, has a gift for studying the eternal whys and wherefores of things that is winning him distinction among his friends. The other day he heard someone use the expression, "God, in his own good time, will bring it about." This caused Johnny to speak up: "God gets in an awful hurry sometimes, don't he?" said he. "Gets in a hurry? Why, how is that, Johnny?" "Oh, Cousin Edith's got a Manx cat, one of the kind that hasn't got any tail, 'cause God must have got in a hurry and didn't finish it; and Uncle Hiram's got a cow that God didn't have time to put any horns on."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 12, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, at 7.30, on "The Sweet By-and-Bye."

DEC. 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 2, Milton Hall; 9, Manchester; 16, Milton Hall; 23, Liverpool; 30, Camberwell.

CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—A. T.

G. DOLMAN.—A lecture on "Is there a God?" by a person who is afraid or ashamed to put his name on the bill is hardly worth troubling about. He might turn out to be utterly incapable and insignificant, or even of the obscurest small fry of the C. E. S.

SIX FREETHINKERS.—Anonymous advice is of very doubtful utility. For all we know the writer may be a Christian.

J. CHADWICK.—Contents bill shall be sent weekly.

BRUNO STATUE FUND.—W. Haines, 1s.; W. Newland, 1s.; E. Haines, 3d.; M. Haines 3d.

EX-ANIMO.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

J. MORGAN.—Thanks, but it was dealt with last week.

EN AVANT.—The *Crimes of Christianity* would give you a good deal of what you require. Most of the stock was destroyed in the fire, but you can obtain odd numbers at 28 Stonecutter Street.

J. SISSON.—The slaughter in Jerusalem when it was captured by the Crusaders included women and children as well as men. Hence the large number. Besides, in old times, besieged cities generally contained more than their ordinary population, for the inhabitants of the surrounding districts flocked into them for shelter.

HENRY EDWARDS.—John is usually represented as a beautiful young man, but we do not see any reason for the suspicion.

A. G.—Used in Christmas Number. Always pleased to hear from you.

J. BISSET.—Hardly up to the mark. You would have done better to compress your matter into half-a-dozen verses instead of spreading it over three dozen. Remember that "brevity is the soul of wit."

B. KNOWLES.—We hope to find room for it.

M. CLAY.—We are always glad to receive newspaper cuttings.

W. CARTER.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums." We write you by post on the other matter.

P. WESTON.—The memorandum escaped our attention, but we discovered it before we received your letter. See advertisement page. "BURNT OUT" FUND.—Received since from late subscribers:—J. Sisson, 2s. 6d.; J. P., 1s. 6d.; Brick, 2s. 6d.; J. H., 1s.

W. LLOYD.—Part 1 of *Comic Bible Sketches* is entirely out of print. Unfortunately the blocks were damaged in the fire.

CAMDEN TOWN.—If Mr. Woffendale denies that we ever received the letter we referred to from a person calling himself Wright, and dating from the Mission Hall, Kings Cross, he is simply one of those persons who "shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire." As to his "ignorance" of the "converts" mentioned, we leave him to the judgment of the North London Freethinkers. After this, all letters about Mr. Woffendale and his "converts" will go into the waste basket. We decline to trouble our readers any further with such a trivial matter.

ANTI-HUMBUG.—The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is a fervid Welshman enjoying a considerable reputation among the London Wesleyans as a sensational preacher. If Professor Calderwood and his colleagues import such a man into the University to bring the students to Jesus, they must have a very mean opinion of the young fellows' intellects.

H. R.—We do not know for certain, but expect that the Bible issued in 1632 is in the Library of the British Museum.

J. HINDLE.—You raise a profound question. We really do not know what was the fate of all the Holy Ghost that was in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene before it was burnt. Perhaps it escaped through a ventilating hole. You had better pray for illumination. If you pray long enough, you are sure to be answered; and if we live long enough you might let us know the result.

CWMAMAN.—Very fair, but you want more practice. Glad to hear you are doing what you can to further the cause in your priest-ridden district.

J. R.—Scarcely up to the mark.

R. FOX.—The American lecturer evidently is not of much account. We suppose God's blessing on the Jews is verified by the Christian persecution they have had to submit to.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Shields Daily News—Women's Suffrage Journal—Liberator—Truthseeker—Bolton Chronicle—Thinker—Leamington News—Bedford Record—Tyldesley and Atherton Chronicle—Boston Investigator—Hyde Reporter—Birmingham Mail—Witness.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current number. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had an enthusiastic reception at Portsmouth last Sunday, the evening audience in the large circus being very numerous and sympathetic. There was plenty of discussion, the "Hour in Hell" exciting the greatest quantity, in which the representatives of some local Christian Defence Society took the lion's share. One of these, a Mr. Millet, had an innings in the morning and afternoon, and he mounted the platform again in the evening. Some one in the gallery cried "Don't preach," whereupon the mild-tempered Millet retired in a pious pet. His conduct was resented by the audience, who cheered lustily when the lecturer denounced the Christian "charity" which insulted a whole meeting for the remark of one man. Mr. Brumage was of opinion that the amiable Millet got up the interruption himself to furnish an excuse for his insult.

TWO or three critics rose announcing themselves as "a seaman in the navy." Following each other as they did, it looked as though the whole of the "Queen's Navee" were on the war path. But there was a solution of continuity, and the lecturer retired to his well-earned rest after one of the hardest days' work he has had for a long time.

WE are happy to see that the Portsmouth Branch is making excellent progress. Mr. J. Brumage, one of the finest veterans in the cause, sticks to the work like a brick, and he has many earnest colleagues by his side, including his wife, who is one of the most ardent Freethinkers in England. The Branch has a capital meeting-place for ordinary occasions, capable of seating nearly three hundred people. It is a converted chapel, and of course it required a good deal of cleaning; but paint and white-wash have effaced every trace of the Holy Ghost, and it is now "fit for the Queen" as the saying is. What is more, it pays its way. Local talent is developing, and good lectures are delivered by members of the Branch. Mr. Lush and Mr. Hore are going to give set replies to Dr. McCann's recent lecture at the Sailor's Rest, and they are well able to make out a good case for Freethought.

A SOUTHSEA lady writes as follows to Mr. Foote: "It was with great interest I listened to your lecture on 'Why women should be Freethinkers.' I have long thought that no progress worth speaking of will be made in getting rid of superstition and priestcraft till women are brought over to Freethought. Even the missionaries in India are finding out that it is lost labor to win over Hindu men to Christianity, while the Hindu women are left to rear fresh batches of Vishnu and Krishna worshippers. It is beginning at the wrong end, and about as useless as attempting to dry up the bed of a river while neglecting to look after the source. So much depends on the mothers of the human race, and were it only from this point of view it would be well if women, as well as men, were Freethinkers."

OUR Christmas Number is now ready, and as we do not mean to print more than the first edition, those who want a copy should order it immediately. Mr. Forder has still remaining some copies of the Summer Number saved from the fire, which he can supply at a penny, or post free twopence.

MR. FOOTE'S *Brown's Story*, *Folly of Prayer*, and *Was Jesus Insane?* are at present out of print. The last is being reprinted, and will be soon ready. It will be followed by others, revised and improved. Early in the new year Mr. Foote will commence a new series of *Bible Heroes*. A new edition of *Bible Romances* is being prepared.

VOL. XXI of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, just published, contains several articles of interest to Freethinkers. Professor Robertson Smith, in addition to the article on Sacrifice, deals with in another part of our columns, has a paper on the Sabbath, in which he gives his opinion that the word cannot be translated "day of rest," since the root of the word implies to sever, to desist, rather than to rest. He says that the moon period was an old sacred division of time, common among the Semites; that the institution of the Sabbath did not originally refer to the account of creation, but to the division of the four quarters of the moon the Sabbath and new moons being frequently referred to together in the older parts of the Bible. Professor Smith leaves us to infer that the story of the Creation or seven days was made up from the more ancient division of time.

OTHER articles of interest are "Rousseau," by G. Saintsbury; "Sainte-Beuve," by Matthew Arnold; "Saint Simon," founder of French Socialism by Thomas Kirkup; "Schiller," by James Sime; "Schopenhauer," by Professor W. Wallace; "Servetus," by Alexander Gordon; "Shaftesbury," by Rev. T. Fowler, who calls him the most plausible and respectable of the deists; "Shakespeare," by T. Spencer Baynes, the editor; and "Shelley," by William M. Rossetti.

PROFESSOR ANDREW SETH gives a very Scotch article on Philosophical Scepticism. Professor Theodor Noldeke deals with Semitic Language, and makes the statement that although the Bible contains some ancient fragments such as the Song of

Deborah, it belongs for the larger part to the time of the later kings. Professor Wellhausen deals with the Septuagint and says that the Old Testament has been permitted "to reach us in a form that is often so corrupt as to sin against both the laws of logic and of grammar, of rhetorical and poetical form." A curious article on the Holy Sepulchre gives the various opinions as to which was the real burial place of Jesus, without pausing to enquire whether he was buried at all!

FOUR professors of the Theological Seminary of Andover, viz., Professors Smith, Harris, Churchill and Tucker, are being prosecuted for heresy. The chief point against them is having, in a publication entitled "Progressive Orthodoxy," asserted the fallibility of the Bible.

PROFESSOR OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES probably had this in view in the lines he recently read at Harvard. He says:

"Too old grew Britain for her mother's beads.
Must we be necklaced with her children's creeds?"

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S new lecture, *Social Salvation*, is said to vex the Christians as much as any of his anti-theological discourses. They hoped to discover that Pagan Bob was in favor of anarchy and bomb-throwing.

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH AND CO have just published the *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* in two handsome volumes by Professor Edward Dowden. The work has as frontispiece a beautiful portrait of the poet at the age of eight or nine years, from a drawing by the Duc de Montpensier. The name of the author guarantees that the work is well done and no doubt it will soon displace the misrepresentations by Mr. Jeaffreson.

PROFESSOR DOWDEN mentions an instance of Christian bigotry that is worth noticing. Some time since, Mr. Oscar Browning, then master at Eton College, inaugurated a subscription for placing a bust of Shelley in the Eton Hall. The money was readily forthcoming, but the reverend Provost of Eton College preemptorily forbade the erection of a memorial to the Atheist.

THE prices of livings have gone down wondrously since the last reform bill. Disestablishment is in the air. At the Auction Mart in London the advowson, with the right of next and perpetual presentation, of the living of Chacombe Vicarage, in the diocese of Peterborough, was offered for sale. The net income was declared to be £259, the present vicar being seventy years old. The price asked was £1,000. The biddings, however, only reached £400 and the "property" in the words of the auctioneer, was withdrawn.

FREETHINKERS who are travelling about at this season of the year should equip themselves with a packet of our tracts, of which Mr. Forder has still a small supply left. The price is sixpence per hundred, or post free sevenpence half-penny; and they contain more matter than any other tracts issued at the price. Our readers will be interested to learn that nearly half a million of these tracts have been circulated during the last three or four years. We are preparing a fresh supply.

THE meeting held at Sunderland last Sunday for the purpose of forming a Branch of the N. S. S., was a great success. The conveners only expected from ten to twenty, but to their surprise the room was crowded. Twenty-four members were enrolled and paid their subscriptions, and as many more promised to join when some definite plan of operations was agreed on. Mr. John Butterford was appointed corresponding secretary, and Mr. Foote has been invited to deliver the opening course of lectures.

MR. W. COOKNEY asks us to acknowledge the following subscriptions for the Children's Party, at the Hall of Science, on Jan. 12; Mr. and Mrs. Burton, 5s.; Mr. and Mr. Robertson, 5s.; Mr. Culver, 1s.; per Mrs. Cookney: Alwright, 1s.; Chapman, 1s.; Rendall, 6d.; Perkins, 1s.; Felton, 1s.; Heale, 2s. 6d.; Friend, 1s.; Norris, 6d.; Hawkes, 2s.; per Mrs. Forder: Godfrey, 5s.; Snookes, 6d.; A Mug, 6d.; Friend, 6d.; Jeffrey, 6d.; G. P., 6d.

FURTHER subscriptions for the Children's Party to Mr. W. Cookney, 1A, Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C. The date is now rapidly approaching, and the appeal for funds should be promptly responded to.

MR. ALBERT BATH, honorary secretary of the Anti-Extraordinary Tithe Association, was presented by the Kent farmers last Monday evening with a gold watch and chain and a purse of gold. Mr. Bath has labored hard and earnestly in this cause, and it is good to see that his efforts are appreciated. However Christians may feel, our readers will be glad to hear that Mr. Albert Bath is a heretic on other matters than tithes.

REV. MR. HIGHFLYER: "I delivered that sermon off-hand. I hadn't given it a moment's thought. How did you like it?" Frank hearer: "I can't say. You see, I didn't give it a moment's thought, either."

GOD HARDENS MEN'S HEARTS.

THE prevalent Christian idea is that it is Satan who influences people for evil and renders them callous. The Bible teaches otherwise. It makes Satan *tempt* men, and it also says that "God did tempt Abraham," but only God is represented as *hardening* human hearts. This petrifying process is *his* prerogative, not Satan's.

When God first appeared to Moses in the burning bush he announced beforehand that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he should refuse to let the Israelites go (Ex. iv., 21). God repeated this announcement of his intention several times (Ex. vii., 3; xiv., 4; xiv., 17). Moses was to demand the release of his fellow-countrymen, but God would take care that the request should be refused. In Exodus vii., 3, 4, Jehovah says:

"I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments."

Moses, in obedience to the divine instructions, performed his great snake trick before the king, but Pharaoh somehow did not accept such wonders as convincing proof of a noble mission. Ordinary reason might suggest that the imitation of God's miraculous trick by the king's own jugglers caused this healthy scepticism. But the Bible shows us the real reason of his unbelief. God "hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said" (Ex. vii., 13). Even when the king's wise men and sorcerers and magicians found their rods or snakes swallowed by the serpent of the Jewish jugglers—a trick obviously not easy of immediate imitation—the king remained incredulous; for the Lord of the Universe had taken the precaution to prevent belief by hardening the royal heart. The divine motive—if we may judge by human comparisons, all others being out of our power—was a most contemptible one. He purposely prevented a man believing truth and doing right in order that he, the author and contriver of the mischief, might have a pretence or semblance of justice in inflicting terrible plagues upon the king's subjects, who were perfectly innocent in the matter. Time after time God prevents belief in his threats in order to get himself honor, as he calls it, by plaguing and killing people and animals (Ex. ix., 12; x., 1, 20, 27; xi., 10; xiv., 8). He boasts of his action and of his motives, and says of Pharaoh:

"I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might shew these my signs before him" (Ex. x., 1).

Finally we read that God also hardened the hearts of the Egyptians (Ex. xiv., 17) in order to secure their destruction in the depths of the sea. He announces his divine intentions thus:

"I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen."

Most of the passages say distinctly that God purposely produced this callousness, but others ignore his all-controlling interference and say that "the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts" (1 Sam. vi., 6) or that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. viii., 15, 32; ix., 7, 34). Contradictions of this kind are of course of no moment whatever to the true believer.

Christians say that God only hardens the hearts of sinners for their previous obstinacy and sin; that is, he only hardens hearts for being already hardened. But the Holy Ghost when inspiring the Pentateuch know nothing of this theory, or else he carefully concealed his opinion and his Almighty comrade's justification. He does not explain God's action as a punishment for Pharaoh's previous sins or callousness of disposition. The motive assigned is altogether different. God had determined long beforehand to harden Pharaoh's heart, that he might show forth signs and wonders and judgments upon the Egyptians. To assume that God was only punishing the previous crimes and contumacies of his royal victim is to invent an excuse which the Holy Ghost did not venture to put forward.

Pharaoh and the Egyptians were not the only people whom God hardened that they might merit and receive perdition. The Lord hardened the spirit and made obstinate the heart of King Sihon, in order to destroy him and his people (Deut. ii., 30). God evidently considered that his own action in making a king perversely stubborn

—or valiantly patriotic, as modern minds might translate it—thoroughly justified the exemplary way in which his pious warriors carried out his orders, by “utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city” (Deut. iii., 6).

The same process of special induration was applied to the nations of Palestine generally. Thus in Joshua xi., 20, we read :

“For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses.”

At a later period Isaiah asks :

“O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?” (Isaiah lxiii., 17).

Jesus himself also confirms the biblical doctrine that hardening of heart proceeds from God. Repeating and sanctioning Isaiah’s idea (Isaiah vi., 9, 10) Christ says :

“Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them” (John xii., 40).

Paul too says that God hath mercy on whom he will and “whom he will he hardeneth” (Romans ix., 18). The God of the New Testament is worse than the God of the Old Testament in proportion as the eternal hell-fire of the Evangelists is worse than the temporary atrocities by which the God of Moses got himself honor upon the Egyptians. The pretended God of Love petrifies men’s hearts as an excuse for showing forth his glory and his justice by inflicting everlasting punishment (Matthew xxv., 46; xviii., 8). If God hardens and softens hearts as he will, where is human responsibility, and where is the free will of which Christians talk so much as an excuse for the evil which their God creates and permits? If God hardens people and then punishes them for that hardness, where is the divine justice? Is it not God himself who should be punished for the hardness, seeing that he caused it, and caused it moreover for the deliberate purpose of inflicting misery to follow it? If a father made his child drunk in order to flog him for it, we should have no doubt as to the folly and injustice displayed. If the father drugged the child or mesmerised him into an artificial state of obstinacy in order to punish or kill thousands or millions of other children in retaliation for what was really his own evil act, we should have no hesitation in describing such conduct as that of a madman or a fiend. It is only when supernatural considerations are introduced that we decline to condemn. Fear of almighty despotism and of subtle and infinite vengeance, combined with a sycophant’s hope of almighty favor, paralyses our judgment and our conscience. The divine criminal escapes for the present. But intellect grows. Enlightenment spreads. Moral courage stands forth to beard the highest criminal and to lay for ever the awfullest ghost that terrified and debased the mind of man with threats of endless agony and with hopes of paltry paradises fit only for the withered hearts of crazy saints, the silly souls of pompous fools, and the pious minds of fawning toadies who can find their bliss in worshipping the very incarnation of glorified crime and brutality called God.

W. P. BALL.

THE DEATH OF OLD NICK.

The Devil’s dead, the Devil’s gone,
The lazy parson’s work is done;
They’ll rant, pray, preach and beg no more.
’Tis vain Jehovah’s help to implore—
He’ll not raise Nickie Ben.

The clergy mourn, sigh, sob and groan,
Because him as God’s pal they own.
His mem’ry ever will be green,
Satan their truest friend has been—
Their mainstay and support.

One duty poor Old Nick forgot,
Which on his mem’ry leaves a blot:
He should have by one final haul
Secured the canting parsons all,
And sent them straight to heaven.

C. KROLL LAPORTE.

REVIEWS.

Democracy. By F. J. PROCTOR. Chat office, Portsmouth. One penny. A spirited defence of democracy, but Mr Proctor need not fancy he speaks for all democrats when he talks of his loyalty to the Queen, and perhaps, after all, he doesn’t mean it himself.

Our Corner. December. Freethought Publishing Company.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with an article on the Labor Statistics Bureau. Mrs. Besant concludes her “Radicalism and Socialism.” Professor Sanday and Mr. John Robertson fight their last round. There are three stories, one by Mrs. Bonner, which is rather striking.

Letter to Lord Randolph Churchill. By C. BRADLAUGH. Freethought Publishing Co. One penny.—Comes to us rather late in the day, but better late than never. It criticises Lord Churchill’s Dartford speech delivered on October 2. It is of course forcible and pointed—that goes without saying; but some of the rhetoric, especially the peroration, is more suited to the platform than the pamphlet.

The Devil of Darkness in the Light of Evolution. A lecture by GERALD MASSEY. Price one shilling. Villa Bordighiera, New Southgate, London, N. This is one of the most eloquent of Mr. Massey’s lectures. He traces the evolution of the Devil from Sut-Typhon, the crocodile-headed representative of darkness, and declares that the Satan of sacerdotal belief is but a shoddy effigy that only wants to be ripped up to show that it is stuffed with saw-dust.

Royalism. A Note on the Queen’s Jubilee. By JOHN ROBERTSON. Freethought Publishing Co. (Fourpence).—A vigorous and well-written protest against the imbecile or hypocritical Royalism of the English people and their political and social leaders. Without losing his head in denunciation, or sinking into the clap-trap of cheap democracy, Mr. Robertson writes under the impulse of a passionate contempt for abjectness which does him infinite credit.

Why I am a Socialist. By ANNIE BESANT. Freethought Publishing Co. One Penny.—Socialist, says Mrs. Besant, is “the one name which is recognised all the world over as the name of those who are opposed to political, social, and religious tyranny.” Evidently Mrs. Besant thinks Freethought must take a back seat, but many Freethinkers, who earnestly battled against all kinds of tyranny before Mrs. Besant ceased denouncing Socialism and took to blessing it, will hardly take it as a compliment. Mrs. Besant writes as though all the “people” lived in “slums,” and as though every savage lived a rollicking life. Her economical logic seems to us as accurate as her social facts.

Roots of Christianity. By ANNIE BESANT. Freethought Publishing Co. Sixpence.—Very interesting and well written, but the title is scarcely apposite. Some time ago Mr. Foote delivered a careful series of lectures at the London Hall of Science under this title, intending to publish them some day. The roots in that case were what sustains the Christian tree, while Mrs. Besant’s roots are rather the relics in Christianity of ancient religions, which many Christians would gladly discard—if they could. With the exception of a few pages, Mrs. Besant’s pamphlet is a good summary of ancient sun-worship. She relies rather too implicitly on Higgins and Inman, but for all that she gives a quantity of stubborn facts to show that much of what is known as Christianity existed long before Christ.

The Logia of the Lord; or Pre-historic Sayings ascribed to Jesus Christ. A lecture by GERALD MASSEY. Price one shilling. Villa Bordighiera, New Southgate, London, N.—In this lecture Mr. Massey carries on his argument that the Jesus of the Gospels is based upon a myth. The primary nucleus of those documents, according to the testimony of Papias, Irenæus and the early Christian fathers, was the collection of logia or sayings of the Lord. Yet many of these sayings were demonstrably pre-extant. Indeed, Mr. Massey gives some evidence that they were little better than an *oila podrida* of Egyptian, Hebrew, and Gnostic sayings. With these sayings as primary data the history in Matthew, our author thinks, “was written on the principle of fulfilling the supposed prophecies found in the Old Testament or elsewhere.”

“The compiler was too uninstructed to know that the prophecies themselves belonged entirely to the astronomical allegory, and never could relate to forthcoming events that were to be fulfilled in human history; and never were supposed to do so, except by the ignorant, who knew no better, and who, in fact, thought the Zodiacal Virgin had brought forth her child on earth, which could only be born, and that figuratively, in heaven. Those who did know better, whether Jews, Samaritans, Essenes, or Gnostics, entirely repudiated the historic interpretation and did not become Christians. They could no more join the ignorant, fanatical Salvation Army in the first century than we can in the nineteenth.”

The lecture is well worth reading.

“Do you realise, sir,” said the Bishop, “that there is one who sees and hears all we do, who can solve our inmost thoughts, and before whom we are but crushed and bruised worms?” “Give us your hand, stranger,” replied the other; “I know just how you feel. I’m married myself.”

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cutter Street, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.